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Problems associated with teaching English language arts to Mexican American pupils are examined. Attention is given to curriculum considerations, methodologies, and innovations for effecting success in language arts development for these children. The four major strategies discussed include: (1) readying the child for the common curriculum, (2) second language learning, (3) reading instructional approaches, and (4) bilingual education. It is concluded that the solution appears to require: a commitment to the need for a newer way of thinking and working with these children and a feel for the problem; a changed approach to planning, decision-making, and teaching, resulting in a different teaching leadership style; and a broadening of the base of participation by opening society's institutions at all levels to all of its peoples. (SW)

PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING THE LANGUAGE ARTS TO SPANISH SPEAKING MEXICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN

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AND

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Prepared for the Conference on Teaching Education for Mexican Americans

Sponsored by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Contents

Introduction 5

Problems and Strategies 7

The Traditional School and Common Curriculum 7

Readying the Child for the Common Curriculum 9

Focusing Efforts on the Language Problem 10

Second Language Learning 11

Concepts of Bilingualism 12

Timing of Second Language Learning 12

Learning Context and Methodology for Second Language Instruction . . . 14

Individual Differences in Second Language Learning 15

Reading Instructional Approaches 16

The New School and Curriculum: Bilingual Education 18

Summary and Conclusions 19

Bibliography 21

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is an outgrowth of a study of the literature undertaken by the authors to ascertain and evaluate the status of language and reading programs for Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans in the Southwest (42). The findings of this review have served to shed some light on the multi-faceted dimensions of the language problems of Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans. Before dealing with the topic of this paper, a number of observations of a general nature will be made.

One of the more perturbing of the findings noted in the literature concerns the "myth, method, and morass" of defining and identifying Mexican Americans. A considerable body of work dealing with Mexican Americans has been and still is being written which falls into the category of what such writers as Ralph Guzman and Octavio Romano have come to call the "quest for the quaint." This type of literature seems to sometimes echo hasty, improper, and spurious generalizations about Mexican Americans based sometimes on what might appear to be less than honest, and occasionally pseudo-scholarly, investigations. Far too many of these types of writings seem to simply present Mexican Americans as an extension of Mexican culture or else as a recent phenomenon in the United States. Premises such as these are questionable. It is unfortunate that in this "quest for the quaint," investigators have confused Mexican Americans with Mexicans. It is true that at first the area of the Southwest in which Mexicans lived was an extension of the Mexican environment. But since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (February 2, 1848), the cultural and linguistic character of this "extension" has changed despite the fact that the Spanish language has tenaciously resisted displacement. Indeed, despite what the casual observer might call "environmental similarity," the fact of the matter is that Mexican Americans (be they English, Spanish speakers, or bilingual) are not Mexicans. Ralph Guzman (17) put it this way:

> ". . . the myth of an automatically assumed special relationship between the Mexican-American people and the Republic of Mexico must give way before research into the true relationship that has varied with time, place and generation and is continuously changing. For many scholars the proximity of Mexico has obscured the fact that problems of the Mexican-Americans relate to American life."

Thus, while some Mexican Americans whose arrival to this country is of recent origin, and hence, they have special ties of kinship to Mexico, the majority of Mexican Americans constitute a native American group of anywhere from first, second, or third generation to multiple generations of U. S. citizenship. An overwhelming majority of these people, thus, are not "immigrants" to this country despite the fact that many still speak Spanish, however well or poorly it may be assessed.

Though the problems of Mexican Americans relate to American life, the fact of "contiguity" between Mexico and the United States, particularly along the border, aids and abets the linguistic problems. But the peoples on either side of the border are different—just as different as English-speaking Canadians are from English-speaking

Americans despite some basic linguistic similarities. Also, while the linguistic acculturation of immigrant groups from overseas countries takes possibly one or two generations, the "Americanization" of Mexican immigrants, if it occurs at all, may take three, four, or five generations—unless they move into non-contiguous and high-density English-speaking communities thoroughly removed from the border.

Related to this issue is the fact that Spanish-speaking Americans and immigrants constitute the second largest linguistic group in this country next to the speakers of the national language, English. There is a range of opinion regarding the nature of the so-called language problem of Spanish-speaking children in the Southwest as it applies to learning in school. Some, for example, view the issue as being essentially rooted in what has been called a "language barrier" imposed upon these children as learners in U. S. schools. Others emphasize factors involving "home environment" as major determinants of English language arts difficulties among Spanish-speaking children. Still others point to race and culture as significant factors. Also considered are the determinants of language acquisition based upon individual and trait differences.

Regardless of the nature of the problem, few would doubt that linguistic disabilities of underprivileged and minority groups represent one of their most fundamental handicaps in U. S. schools. For the most part, however, current views and school practices dealing with language, culture, and behavior are still wholly influenced by historical, traditional, and somewhat fallacious concepts. These concepts insufficiently explain the intricate relationships existing between language, culture, and behavior. Equally unfortunate is that these concepts tend to reinforce existing stereotypes about groups of people, their behaviors, characteristics, and needs. Among the more pejorative of these concepts are some mythical notions regarding such concepts as "fatalism, machismo, and manana" that are invariably ascribed to Mexican Americans, when they manifest forms of typical human behaviors to various degrees of stress and frustration. Historically solidified, inflexible, and fallacious concepts such as these are frequently seen to filter into teaching styles, attitudes, and behaviors with Spanish-speaking children. These attitudes, when imbedded deeply, invariably can be reasoned to lead to crude, forceful, arbitrary, and capricious educational learning environments. Forcing English and pseudo-middle-class cultural values upon these children in highly artificial and sometimes even hostile, primitive, and prejudicial ways is an end result accruing from these misplaced notions. Hispanic culture and language is usually either ignored or condemned. Figures on school failure, underachievement, dropout rate, and college attendance (33, 54) are strongly suggestive that these attitudes and conditions, certainly known to be in existence, lack validity and require serious and immediate reexamination. Their qualitative-quantitative contribution to the problems of learning the language arts by these children has been postulated by others as well.

Language is a serious affair in the life of human beings and no one denies the cruciality of its role in educational, economic, and social success. In the United States there are over a million teachers of "language arts." Most of them are in the elementary schools (roughly 100,000 of them in high schools), but their training, particularly as it applies to Spanish-speaking children, is about as precise as the training once given to Marine Corps sharpshooters when they were instructed to simply crank in "Kentucky

windage" in order to get on target. Until recently, few people outside of some concerned workers were aware that teaching the English language arts to Mexican American children constituted a unique problem, much less that such a problem necessitated a consideration of new strategies for its solution. In fact, most Americans have been and still are under the impression that American public schools have been doing a "good job" in educating all the youth of this country.

This paper proposes to examine some of the problems associated with teaching the English language arts to Mexican American pupils. Attention will be given to curriculum considerations, methodologies, and innovations for effecting success in the crucial area of language arts development for these children. One major point to be made now is the acceptance of the need for Americans of all origins to learn to communicate in the national language—English. The more important theme of this paper, however, is the need for a serious reexamination of the ways and means to better accomplish this end and an inquiry into some other objectives that might be of equal importance such as bilingualism.

PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

The Traditional School and Common Curriculum

One of the most fundamental and persistent of educational problems that underlies learning dysfunction concerns itself with both the role of the school in a democratic society and its responsibilities as an institution both to society and to the individual. Our schools as public institutions have for generations apparently failed to seriously consider these issues. This persistent reluctance reflects itself in the miseducation of poverty minority youth today in most areas of the United States. The premise of "equal educational opportunity" that derives from the earlier origins of American public education has imbedded deep within its roots the denominator of a common educational curriculum for all children (9). This implies not only equivalent media of instruction (language medium, methodology, materials, etc.) but equivalent timing for the introduction of such learning experiences, equivalent expectations for the acquisition of such learnings, and hence, equivalent methods for measuring, appraising, assessing, and evaluating such learnings. Many children of Spanish-speaking parents, however, do not begin school in the United States with either linguistic, experiential, psycho-cultural, or socioeconomic equivalence to their English-speaking contemporaries. These children are frequently placed in segregated, but totally English-oriented, schools and classrooms. Learning experiences in English are introduced precipitously and too often taught by inadequately trained, somewhat pessimistic teachers who are themselves required by supervisors to move along according to arbitrary time-tables that are frequently inappropriate even for affluent English-speaking pupils.

To compound the problems faced by these children and their teachers, absurd regulations are imposed forbidding the use of Spanish, the only language or the major language in which many of these children can truly communicate. Thus, many teachers

cannot or are not even permitted officially to mediate communications in the children's first language. This often stems from the quaint American custom that whatever is "good" and must be learned, must always be taken in complete, heavy doses taken regularly, massively and early, until the desirable change has come about—then all will be well! English is naturally a crucially important area of learning in the schools; hence, it has been "decided" that all of our children, in spite of their unique environments and backgrounds, must be ready to become totally English-speaking as they pass through the schools' doors. Very soon, however, frequently early in first grade, Spanish-speaking children are also expected to begin learning to read in English. With little understanding of some of the most basic concepts underlying the prerequisite abilities necessary for beginning reading (6), with no attempts at assessing the constellation of areas (linguistic, perceptual, physical, attitudinal, educational) vital to early and subsequent reading success (51), Spanish-speaking children are initiated into the mystique of reading. It will invariably be in English basic readers, the same frequently used with the more affluent children on the other end of town, but with unfortunate results that perpetuate themselves from year to year and generation to generation.

As the Spanish-speaking child is learning to listen and speak in English, he is expected to learn to read and write. In reading, a major task in the acquisition stage (53) is learning to associate sounds with symbols for the decoding of word-concepts. This learning will be confounding and confusing for many of these children due to a constellation of problems associated, among other things, with phonemic differences between Spanish and English, lack of a sound repertory of meaning concepts (frequently in both Spanish and English) necessary for understanding the meanings of words being pronounced, auditory perception, difficulties, etc. Fear, confusion, and uncertainty between the child and his teachers permit him at best to arbitrarily learn to associate sounds with letters or words (18) without regard to the accuracy of the sounds reproduced or the meanings of words pronounced. Confusion and dysfunction interact when, because of the time-table, these children now (for some absurd notion having to do with graded classes--certain books "must be" completed to finish the year for promotion) must be pushed forward into ever more accomplished reading involving greater and more comprehension in content area reading materials. Their facility with the English language, while growing, frequently still lags behind the level of linguistic ability required to comprehend the more complex syntactical structures occurring in these reading materials. Lack of knowledge of English idiomatic expressions has also been shown to create reading comprehension difficulties (55). Now these children must flexibly apply both their uncertain ability to decode words and their inadequate English facility to this kind of reading comprehension. More often than not, the content of what they are asked to read deals with concepts somewhat foreign to their experiences. Little effort is likely to be expended to prepare them for the concepts, understandings, and ideas that the authors assume are established before youngsters are required to grapple with reading materials such as these.

This form of educational curriculum is not "equal"—it is only "equivalent." The notion that the school's responsibility to the individual begins and ends with providing a common curriculum for all children irregardless of special abilities and needs—and it is

the individual's responsibility to "rise up" from the masses of the poor, the oppressed, the disadvantaged, and make the most of such an opportunity—reflects a style that is neither in keeping with the rights of children for an education and equal opportunity in a democratic society nor does it keep to the basic tenets of the responsibility of government and its institutions to meet the needs of all of its peoples.

This tradition of forced amalgamation of children into some mythical curriculum mode, a "come and get it" style, is a particularly self-defeating educational approach when the child comes to school with so many difficulties operating against him that the chances for him succeeding are frequently few. Yet modifications of this approach under certain more flexibly arranged instructional conditions and for certain minority children with unique familial, geographic, psycho-cultural, and individual characteristics, could be reasoned to be successful—if success for these few is identified with socioeconomic status, mobility, and the achievement of middle-class things and values. Some negative effects of various acculturating experiences on emotional adjustment and group identification for such individuals always occur. Society's loss of the unique linguistic and cultural heritage that such "successful" individuals might give up as a result of assimilation—American-style—is also a matter to be considered.

Readying the Child for the Common Curriculum

Rather than breaking too fast from "tried and proven" approaches, a so-called recent innovation has been developed that is predicated on attempts to prepare or make the child ready for the types of existing and traditional language arts instructional programs just described. Projects such as Head Start and other pre-school compensatory educational programs have been funded which attempt to provide an array of compensatory offerings and experiences ranging from broadening young children's backgrounds and language facilities to developing aesthetic experiences, as well as offering health programs and medical care. Most of such programs are conducted in short-termed summer sessions; some are year-round. Few, however, are planned carefully enough to include scientific study of the short- or long-term effects resulting from such programs. The results of such appraisals, if available at all, are seldom if ever carefully applied to the intelligent adjustment of subsequent programs for similar children. Indeed, few of these programs are designed in such a way that they coordinate and articulate with existing school instructional programs awaiting these children. From an administrative point of view, problems pertaining to the autonomy of such programs, conflicts between local school officials and Federal officials, difficulties in securing cooperation, facilities, and expert personnel tend to obscure the many positive effects (14) for various populations of disadvantaged children that are semi-objectively reported from time to time. One can hypothesize that like the common curriculum approach, under special conditions and for specific children, certain well-designed types of pre-school and early primary compensatory educational programs could contribute significantly in various ways towards making some Spanish-speaking children somewhat more ready for traditional instructional approaches. Data are not available that can clearly and unequivocally define the variables and optimal conditions necessary for

success with different children. It could be reasoned that with superior and creative leadership and direction, various programs such as these could be organized in such a manner that the experiences would be based to a large degree upon unique child needs and regional conditions. With well-trained and sensitive staff workers, a very high degree of flexibility and individualization of instruction could also be built into such programs so that even greater degrees of development for individual children would be made possible.

Ideally, such pre-school programs should exert a profoundly influential effect on the reexamination, scrutiny, and subsequent reshaping of existing and traditional language arts curriculum awaiting these children upon their arrival in schools. It would indeed seem reasonable to suggest to leaders and decision-makers that under expert guidance, data could be collected both formally and in non-standardized fashions in such pre-school programs. These data could make significant contributions in providing scientific knowledge that would contribute to a more objective and sensitive understanding of necessary curriculum modifications for these children in the language arts. The public schools must be ready and able to cooperatively participate and willingly open institutions to outside counsel. School leadership in many regions has all too frequently manifested more than reluctance regarding propositions such as these.

Whatever the nature of these programs, if knowledge of and attention to local conditions, individual child needs, and existing school programs is lacking, then valuable time and energies are inefficiently and unrealistically being expended. Most fallacious of all, however, is the assumption that all Spanish-speaking pre-schoolers who are recipients of such programs, short- and long-term, well-designed or inefficient, will now be fluent enough linguistically in English and ready enough experientially to begin formal instruction in English in a common and traditional education curriculum. A six week's summer program or even one of a year's duration (open to only a few) might certainly help some in gaining more facility in these areas but, in spite of such gains, it can be reasoned that progress must still be expected to be slower for many of these children and instruction must be even more differentiated and individualized than for their more advantaged English-speaking contemporaries.

Focusing Efforts on the Language Problem

There is general agreement that the language factor is intimately involved in the educational achievement of Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans. There is sparse research data directed specifically to the nature of this issue. This paper, therefore, must by necessity depend on information from areas not always identified with empirical research. The essential area of concern, it would appear, should be the goals of the educational process, specifically in the area of language arts. These goals have been variously defined as training to produce literate, informed, critical citizens. The goals of language arts instruction have been set forth as developing oral communicative skill and developing functionally literate adults for the tasks and responsibilities of a modern society (36). Although valid and reasonable enough, the proof of failure in achieving these goals with Mexican American children lies in the kinds of educational statistics

cited earlier. If the goals are reasonable and simple, then what accounts for the deplorable status of language arts achievement for Mexican Americans?

One answer might quite logically lie in the approaches and strategies of instruction heretofore followed in these areas. We have briefly highlighted some effects that could be predicted from the common curriculum approach based upon the fallacious notion that traditional forms of English language curriculum are suited for all of the children of all of the people. Besides attempts to make Spanish-speaking minority children from poverty environments ready for this type of curriculum, other approaches that are compensatory in nature have been designed. A discussion of those which tend to focus efforts on English language development follows.

Second Language Learning

Of relatively recent origin is the concept of teaching English as a **second** language to these children (32). This approach diverges from traditional English language arts methodology somewhat in that the approach relies more heavily on linguistic concepts. These concepts employ structural patterns which are designed to introduce and acquaint the student with latent forms of the language. An attempt is made in such programs to approximate the manner in which the child's first language was hypothetically acquired. One of the many difficulties associated with this new approach is that too many teachers in such second language approaches to English for Spanish-speaking children are only superficially trained and knowledgeable in the necessary linguistic procedures underlying this method. The complex constellation of concepts and understandings required to wholesomely develop an environment for successful language learning is seldom if ever present in such teachers. The unique psycho-cultural effects of poverty, minority status, and linguistically different environments of Spanish-speaking children call for a type of teacher who must uniquely be prepared for such a challenge.

An outgrowth of the concept of second language instruction is the concept that the English language can be taught as a foreign language. Teaching English as a Second Language or TESL (39) is an attempt to restructure the instructional processes in the traditional language arts so that learning English for the Spanish-speaking child will be enhanced. The process relies on linguistically patterned practice with repetition through audio-visual-lingual means. It is a highly structured approach that also requires, among other things, specific teaching talents such as organization and sequence of instruction, creative expansion from the formal to the informal, and ability to develop meaningful application and transfer of experiences. From a face validity point of view, applying second language methodology and TESL programs in improving the English facility of Spanish-speaking children appears to be of great potential usefulness. In practice, however, these programs do not seem to be realizing the successes that would be expected. Too many factors of apparently fundamental importance are frequently unknown, overlooked, or ignored by program organizers. A discussion follows of some of these fundamental factors that should be considered if successful second language programs for Spanish-speaking children are to result.

Concepts of Bilingualism. One of the major difficulties in determining the language instructional needs of Spanish-speaking children in the Southwest is related to the frequent practice of labeling such children as "bilingual" without reference to its meaning or components. Jensen (20) has outlined a series of eleven differing concepts of "bilingualism" as defined in the literature. In discussing the term as it is frequently applied in school practice, Robinett (40) also points out the confusion of meanings. For practical purposes, Abraham (1) has defined the term as referring to unilingual children whose one language is not English. Lambert (23) points out the need to account for individual differences in defining the term, illustrating this by describing two persons with differing forms of bilingualism: one with equal facility in two languages yet somewhat limited in both; the other with superior intellectual ability and who is equally skilled in both languages. He also develops the term "bilingual balance" referring to the demonstration of equal skill in two languages. Of particular interest is Weinreich's theory (52) in which bilingualism is dichotomized on the basis of the context in which learning takes place. A "compound bilingual system" is learned within a single context, and the symbols of both language functions are interchangeable alternatives with the same meaning. A "coordinate bilingual system" is theorized to develop when the learning contexts are culturally, temporarily, or functionally separate. The result would be two sets of language symbols functionally distinct and independent. In the Southwest, the former system produces "binary phenomenon," i.e., where the linguistic symbols of both languages are **mixed** in utterances irregardless of which language's syntactic structure is used.

The myriad definitions and emphases of the term "bilingualism" thus serve both as a source of confusion as well as for major educational misunderstandings when Spanish-speaking pupils are so classified **en masse** for the purpose of second language instruction. More often the situation is such that many of these children are Spanish-speaking only and hence, "monolingual." This is not always the case, however. Thus, a careful and systematic appraisal of the language status of every child should be considered an area of major importance in designing and organizing second language programs.

Timing of Second Language Instruction. The timing of second language instruction represents another factor of importance in designing and organizing second language programs. Dimitryevic (12) **stresses** the importance of the age at which a child becomes conscious of using two different systems of verbal communications. This consideration deals with the issue of timing as to the occurrence or development of the second language. Should the second language be introduced **before, simultaneously, alternatively,** or **after** the development of the first language?

The underdeveloped use of the English language facility among many children of Mexican descent can be demonstrated (19). While there is some evidence that children can "catch up" and approach equality with monolingual English-speaking children by approximately age thirteen in U. S. public schools (31, 50, 53), the effect of this language lag in English can be considered part of a cumulative-deficit effect on school achievement, particularly in language arts related areas.

Because of this, some support the view that for children who are required to learn the language of instruction of the school, the younger the child, the better and faster will he learn English (8). The natural impulse of many, therefore, is to support as the answer the early intensive bombardment of Spanish-speaking children with English stimulation. Typically, this is approached without attention to the influence of such early instruction on both initial mastery of the first language and subsequent verbal development in general. In this regard, Mackey (30) discusses the influence of "bilingual interference"—the divergence from the local standard as a result of including in the message features from another code. Inappropriate timing of the introduction of English to Spanish-speaking children can thus be hypothesized to contribute towards the creation of a type of bilingual who might be inadequate and insecure in English as well as in his own language. This effect could have a profound negative influence on general emotional and verbal development as well as subsequent school achievement.

In an outstanding review of the research in this area, Singer (44) quotes detailed evidence regarding the possibilities for detrimental effects on the development of both languages, derived from simultaneous learning of the two, particularly when the second language conflicts with various functions of the first. Smith (45), working with bilingual children of Chinese descent (ages approximately three and six whose parents were above the U. S. average in occupations), concluded that it is inadvisable to unnecessarily begin young children in a second language unless they are linguistically above average. This, she pointed out, could only be ascertained after some progress in their native tongue had been made.

Due to a paucity of reports regarding timing in teaching English to Spanish-speaking children from poverty environments, the writers have had to rely instead on evidence concerning foreign language instruction in the elementary schools. In this regard, Singer (44) claims that sophisticated judgment is best for determining the optimum age for beginning a second language. He points out that the consensus of opinion seems to be **after** the primary years and **before** completion of the intermediate grades. Differences of opinion certainly exist. Persky (38) discusses a "bilingual period" between ages six and eleven years in which learning could occur with minimal resistance, self-consciousness, comparisons to mother tongue, and mental shock. But Jensen (20) discusses some effects of improper handling of second language learning by associating factors such as bilingual interference, confusion, trauma, emotional instability, and social maladjustment with the maladroit forcing of a second language on children not yet ready for such an experience.

Apparently, the tradition of early, intensive bombardment of these children with English might need reexamination. It would appear that additional research in this area is indicated—particularly, studies in which English second language instruction is differentially timed to be introduced to specific and clearly defined populations of Spanish-speaking children with the intent of studying the effects of differences in such timing on various linguistic, psychological, and educational dependent variables. Mediating variables such as linguistic aptitude, geographic, regional, familial, and other differences must be controlled and studied in terms of the variously possible and potentially significant interactions.

Learning Context and Methodology for Second Language Instruction. Another major issue in second language instruction for Spanish-speaking children centers on approach and methodology. In terms of approach, Bowen (7) points out that the design of language teaching should be predicated on knowing what terminal behaviors are expected. He suggests that the desired terminal behavior in a second language is communication within a relevant range of experience. Ideally, he comments, the same range the student commands in his first language should be established in the second. Crowley (11) highlights the need to recognize the difference between teaching a foreign language and second-dialect programs. He is concerned here with learning-context based upon variations in "bilingualism" that are present in a given school population. He describes four basic techniques of language instruction, contrasting the overlap and differences in dialect teaching vs. foreign language instruction, pointing out differences between the two both in content and methodology. Are schools identifying young Spanish-speaking pupils in terms of this conceptualization and providing differentially organized English language methodology? Crowley claims that frequently this is not so.

Teaching English as a second language involves no single or simplistic methodology. As Allen (2) has pointed out, TESL criteria must include consideration of teaching spoken English, English structure, English vocabulary, English writing, and English reading and literature. As has been demonstrated by the varieties of approaches formulated by linguists and educators, each of these aspects necessitates a distinct methodology. Marckwardt (32), for example, suggests "carefully organized teaching materials . . . as well as a collection of source materials . . . assembled against a background of systematically prepared contrastive cultural analyses." Crawley (11), on the other hand, recommends TESL programs utilizing the techniques of contrastive analysis to identify the essential phonological and grammatical differences between the two languages involved. In the area of contrastive analysis, Stockwell and Bowen (49) discuss the linguistic differentials between English and Spanish as well as recommendations for implementing such analysis in TESL programs. There is, however, a paucity of reported research regarding the effects of English as second language programs specifically designed and engineered around contrastive linguistics for Spanish-speaking children. Smith (46) identifies TESL objectives as both academic and cultural, contending that the first objective is met through orally structured skills involving the repetition of language patterns. Like Finnocchiaro (13), she recommends rich involvement of the child in stories, games, poems, pictures, dramatizations, etc. that will enhance his linguistic skills.

An additional but crucial aspect of teaching English as a second language is the teacher. The training of teachers of English for linguistically different children from impoverished environments frequently leaves much to be desired. Developing English fluency in Spanish-speaking pupils requires training and skill, but also sensitive, flexible, and creative individuals who understand these children as well as the nature of language and how it is developed.

For the most part, language instruction for teachers of Spanish-speaking children seems to concentrate on various technical and sometimes superficial aspects of linguistics. And though linguistic science has pointed out that each language has a

distinct physiology, these findings rarely make their way into the classroom. Thus, "binary phenomenon" is regarded as a manifestation of linguistic inferiority, leading to the fallacious notion that Mexican Americans are "illiterate in two languages." Poor training of such teachers invariably leads to poor instruction for the children. Agreement regarding the need for bilingual teachers of Spanish-speaking pupils is also virtually unanimous. Along with this is the need on the part of teachers to develop deeper linguistic insights, among which should be the concept of "tagmatic differentials," i.e., the process of ordering and arranging linguistic symbols, especially as it applies to Spanish-speaking children (37).

All too frequently, a teacher might spend an entire summer studying "Techniques for Teaching English as a Second Language" and the science of "Linguistics" as it applies to language instruction, only to return to her old ways in September as if nothing had happened in the workshop, institute, or summer course she attended. With this in mind, Montes (35) suggests that a new orientation toward both language instruction and the selection of teachers must be developed emphasizing sensitivity to the diverse and complex issues of the problem.

Individual Differences in Second Language Learning. This factor is predicted to have a fundamental influence on second language learning. Internal and external parameters to be considered in determining individual child needs would probably include linguistic learning facility, learning potential, perceptual and psychological factors, socioeconomic status, familial factors, environmental, geographic, and regional influences, psycho-cultural dimensions, etc.

Some writers have particularly stressed the importance of consideration for psycho-cultural factors in language learning (16, 24, 42). There is the strong likelihood that various conditions providing for reenforcement of second language learning are of great importance. Reports of careful assessments dealing with these factors and their effects on learning English for Spanish-speaking children have yet to be done. Questions must be answered such as, "How can school programs of English instruction for Spanish-speaking children compensate for the significance of little or no family, community, or peer reinforcement of English language functions being learned?" Indeed, one major question involves contrasting the differences between compensatory second language programs in the all-too-frequently segregated school of these children and the influence of integrated schools on the development of English language facility. Lorge and Mayans (28) found that Puerto Rican pupils learned English better in New York when they were placed in classes with English speakers, but little additional research seems to be available in this area.

Discussing another related aspect of child status, Lambert (23) claims that in successful language learning, the learner must wish to identify with the member of the referent linguistic and cultural group—be willing to take on subtle aspects of their behavior. Indeed, Cordasco (10) has described "poverty" as the common denominator in the problems of minority children with language, cultural, social, and psychological differences as its parameters. A persistent question is: How do conditions of poverty, segregation, prejudice, and alienation result in ethnocentric behaviors towards the

dominant cultural group and its language that effect second language learning? How do unique regional, geographic, and environmental factors interact with one another to effect learning English? The influence of individual differences as they relate to poverty, inequality of opportunity, etc. could be considered major considerations in second language learning.

It becomes apparent that massed, undifferentiated, arbitrarily timed, and poorly taught second language instruction in English for Spanish-speaking children of poverty, segregation, and alienation will be less than optimal for many of these children. Attention to some of the areas of concern mentioned in this section could be reasoned to be strategically valuable. The language problems of Spanish-speaking children often appear to be approached on far too simplistic a basis. There is no one language problem nor is the term "bilingual" an appropriate label for all children with Spanish surnames. Timing the introduction of second language experiences, as well as differentiating the methodology of such instruction, appears to require: the utmost care; sophistication; and attention to individual differences and psycho-cultural, geographic, and socioeconomic considerations as well. An entire spectrum of variables should be considered if serous and high-level second language instruction is really to be attempted. Without these considerations it can be reasoned that inadequate English language instructional programs could stifle and truncate potential English language growth and have profoundly negative effects as well on the motivation and spirit of young Mexican American children.

A combination of other factors also continues to operate negatively in such programs: the frequent lack of committed and well-trained leaders, supervisors, and teachers, along with Federal funds which are given too easily, too quickly, and too often to those who have proven their inability in both caring about and understanding, as well as leading, in the operations of such projects for these children. While all Americans must learn to communicate in English, the question as to how and by whom this can be successfully accomplished is far more fundamental a consideration at this late period of time than the endless, uninformed debates over English vs. Spanish and grotesquely absurd authoritarian approaches such as "Spanish detention."

Reading Instructional Approaches

Reading is inseparable from the other areas of the language arts. Facility in this skill, if comprehending the meaning of connected passages is the major goal, is dependent upon an aural-oral grasp of the language being studied. Two approaches have been touched upon up to this point related to reading strategies: first, teaching the child to read in a common reading curriculum and second, readying the child for the common curriculum. Some serious problems relevant to the misuse of either approach have been touched upon. Yet each of these has been suggested to hold some undetermined and inherent value for specific children under given conditions, the nature of which is yet to be investigated.

Another and multi-faceted strategical approach to reading will be identified here. This strategy is defined as basically some attempts to change or adjust the reading

curriculum to meet better the needs of the Spanish-speaking child than the existing and traditional reading methodologies do. The development of somewhat new and possibly more appropriate reading instructional materials and experiences for the needs of these children has quite recently been in progress and is receiving interest, attention, and some use in a few areas. While development and field-trials are and have been underway for some time, research evidence regarding the effectivity of these various approaches with Spanish-speaking children specifically has been difficult to find. The following is a brief presentation of some of these approaches.

1. Reading experiences designed around programs based in part upon linguistic science such as the *Miami Linguistic Reading Series* described by Robinett (40), or a reading program based upon an oral language program in English with culture-fair science materials as described by Arnold (4) are recent and hold relatively promising possibilities. Like all instructional approaches, however, they can become effective and valuable as the quality of teachers who will eventually use them. The reading problems of Spanish-speaking children might certainly be reasoned to be open to alleviation in some yet unknown way by means of more carefully designed reading instructional approaches, experiences, and materials such as these. These approaches, to be effective, must in some way account for unique regional and individual child characteristics and needs. Strong, capable teachers who are able to build interest, motivate, and develop atmospheres conducive to learning, who are free enough to stop and diverge from instruction to further develop needed concepts, as well as teachers who can creatively organize for this type of instruction are essential. Rare teachers such as these might be more successful with these children with newer approaches—or possibly with almost any approach. The problems involved in teacher training, both at the pre- and post-service levels, are not the purposes of this paper, yet they do obviously relate to reading problems and strategies.

2. A second approach based upon providing reading experiences stemming from the child's own daily life and oral expression has been called the "Language-Experience Approach" and has been described by Lee and Allen (26). The approach is also well-described in several sources (47,48). It is based on the assumption that reading will be enhanced by giving the young learner the opportunity to begin this complex form of learning by reading materials that he and his group dictate from their own everyday experiences and in their own words. Bond and Wagner (6) discuss strengths and some serious weaknesses of this type of approach within the context of teaching reading to general populations rather than linguistically different children. It can be reasoned, however, that many more advantages specifically for pupils who have unique linguistic characteristics and environmental backgrounds might be possible with this approach when carefully used under expert and knowledgeable guidance. On the other hand, many of the difficulties described by Bond and Wagner could also operate for these children when this approach is perceived as an overly simplified kind of panacea and hence, maladroitly handled.

It would seem that each instructional strategy from readying these children to the development of new approaches and materials appears to hold potential value for enhancing the reading abilities of some of these children. Teaching behaviors interact

with both the learner and the instructional approach, however, and little research, if any, is available as yet shedding light on some of these variables. For the present, it would seem that action-oriented experimentation with carefully built-in research designs for the assessment of various outcomes within the reading and language process is a necessity. Universities, school systems, research foundations, and governmental agencies must begin to cooperatively plan long-term research that will initiate the process of acquiring some sorely needed knowledge in this area. At the same time, schools must begin to field-test and study objectively both the old and the new in reading methodology.

The New School and Curriculum: Bilingual Education

A number of writers have pointed out that reading in a second language will require the decoding of more information and will hence be a slower process (22,25). Others have shown that reading in the national language will be enhanced under certain conditions when the first language is used as the initial medium of instruction (21, 34). Many writers urge that the native language, not the second language, be used as the medium of instruction (3, 5, 27, 29). The reenforcing value of such instruction and the transfer effect into the second language has been receiving growing interest recently.

The concept of bilingual-bicultural education has been rather well-discussed recently by Gaarder (15). He highlights various organizational approaches for a bilingual school, describing a "one-way" plan in which one group is learning two languages and a "two-way" plan in which two groups are each learning their own and the other's language. Various dimensions of these plans involve adding the first language to curriculum experiences or the second language as the medium of learning in a given curriculum area. Segregated vs. mixed classes, equal vs. unequal time, and treatment with the second language are patterns of organization also outlined.

The concept of bilingual-bicultural education appears to be a more than significant concept for meeting the needs of Spanish-speaking children. Rodriguez (41) has called for the expansion of this concept throughout the Southwest. Its far-reaching, humanistic nature and attention to individual needs, its conservation of unique linguistic and cultural resources, and its attempt to internationalize and broaden U. S. public education for all children has potentially far-reaching consequences for education and our society. Its major fallacy rests upon the notion that society, its institutions, its teachers, and its educational leaders will be willing and able to reorient their attitudes and approaches and be willing to open their institutions so that the kind of environment necessary for the successful realization of the goals of this approach will be realized.

Traditionally, the American public school has been typified not by the nurturing of those who differ from some mythical norm but by their forced assimilation into some mold. Many of the individual learning problems involved in education both for the advantaged and less affluent youngsters of our society in some way result from conflicts between the schools' demands on individuals to learn according to some arbitrary and historical concept of what should be learned, how, at what time, and in what sequence, while individual needs and differences frequently demand differentiated approaches.

The Spanish-speaking child, in dire need of flexible, creative, and innovative teaching, symbolizes this issue. His differences are in kind and degree as compared to those of other minority children who have come to our schools for the past decades. He represents, however, the largest linguistic minority in the United States—as well as a linguistic majority in the Western hemisphere. Indeed, he is also a linguistic majority in certain southwestern areas of the United States. This would imply that our society should, in fact, be concerned with the nurturing of his linguistic heritage not only from the point of the conservation of our linguistic resources, but from the perspective of realizing the many benefits of these talents in international relationships and affairs as well. Bilingual education, among other things, has been conceptualized to realize some of these goals.

Bilingual education is also concerned with the individual's need to maintain his linguistic identity which some claim to be a major determinant of his perspective, perceptions, and cognitive style.

Bilingual education has also as its basis the desire to both enhance the horizons of the English-speaking child and open up truly equal educational opportunity for the Spanish-speaking child, who now will be given the chance to learn by utilizing his first language as well as introducing him to the national language.

One of the most critical issues in bilingual education is the preparation of the prospective teacher and leader for bilingual programs. The old teacher preparation strategies are inadequate for the challenges and needs of bilingual education as they are coming to be perceived as inadequate for all modern education. The prospective teacher in bilingual education must truly become an educator conversant in the ways of language instruction, equally bilingual as her charges, but also trained in such disciplines as education, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. These should add to her competence and understanding necessary for developing the kind of bilingual, biliterate young citizens which our rapidly changing civilization requires. The provisions of the Bilingual Education Act may enable the United States to overcome the "lexocentric" attitudes that have hitherto characterized our approach to foreign languages and cultures.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper was to review problems and strategies in teaching language arts to Spanish-speaking Mexican American children. In this regard, four major strategies and various problems associated with each were discussed. On the basis of these comments, the following summary statements are in order.

1. The traditional school and language arts curriculum is neither completely appropriate for middle-class affluent children nor certainly for Spanish-speaking children. In the case of the latter group, the results have been shown to be somewhat near catastrophic. Major changes in the leadership, organization, staffing, and instruction in some of our public schools seem to have been long in order.

2. Readying children by means of pre-school programs for already existing but traditional curriculum is a step in the right direction. Sound approaches necessitate

many considerations that are not frequently found in such programs. While without doubt such programs are humane and important contributions, they are frequently unrealistic, inefficient, and ineffective in terms of definitive impact on school success for many of these children. The superior effects reported resulting from some of these programs usually deal with important outcomes that are not translated into school success until later—sometimes too late! The overall value of these programs has yet to be realized and much experimental work is in order.

3. English as a second language programs appear to be of considerable surface value. Unfortunately, they are seldom if ever designed and effectuated with enough refinement to meet their potential contribution. Too often they exist as lip-service to the notion that something else should be done for Spanish-speaking children, and some schools use pitifully inadequate examples of such programs in their districts as trappings for the image of modernization and innovation that they would like to project. Ignorance as to the nature of language as communication, prejudicial and authoritarian behavior towards the use of Spanish, and ineptness in the teaching of English to these children characterize too many such programs.

4. Reading instructional methodologies are only in the beginning stages of development and experimentation for these children. Few teachers of reading in too many schools are even aware of the rudiments of teaching reading effectively to English-speaking youngsters, no less to children whose ability to learn to read is complicated by many factors including linguistic differences. Many so-called innovations are under development or are haphazardly being used in the typical non-scientific, Hawthorne-effect-like, love-hate fashion of the U.S. school teachers. Some of these programs already have come to be perceived as panaceas and are being used exclusively and inappropriately as the sole answer to the reading difficulties of Spanish-speaking children. Reading instructional programs are frequently chosen at the whim of one individual in a position of leadership who is both overly certain and inadequately prepared for such decision-making. The future in this area appears unpredictable under the present conditions.

5. Bilingual education is probably the single most important innovation as yet. Too few people understand its basic assumptions and only few examples of even rudimentary bilingual education programs prevail. Many instances of misuses of the concept in the literature and in maladroitly designed educational approaches that bear little, if any, semblance to the intent of bilingual education can already be found. The danger is great that if this approach is moved into too rapidly and under the same conditions as others, it too will fall by the wayside.

In conclusion, the proposition is presented that intricately involved the warp and woof of the various approaches discussed in various degrees and combinations are three critical fallacies. It would seem that all seriously concerned with the language learning problems faced by Spanish-speaking children and those responsible for understanding the years of failure by our institutions might consider these fallacies and their implications:

1. "The Fallacy of Simplicity" involves the reduction of a complex condition to a single factor. The language problem reduced to the use of the label "bilingualism," or

the application of a second language program, or the use of some linguistically oriented reading instructional materials, when exclusively applied to the education of these children has the inherent danger of failure due to oversimplification;

2. "The Experiential Fallacy" could result from such failures and operate based upon the syllogism, "We have tried it, it did not work; therefore, it is not the appropriate approach." Some older and even less appropriate strategy is thus conveniently reenforced. The hopelessness engendered by trying (yet not understanding what the approach really required) and failing (yet not really knowing why) can negatively influence both the attitudes of the school and the community to the job at hand and towards one another as well; and

3. "The Fallacy of Understanding" is the fundamental issue. Programs, materials, methodologies, organizational plans, and teacher styles are important and unexplored components that require a great deal of scientific study. From this, information might be obtained that will contribute towards greater knowledge. However, all of these facets are but components in a global process too complex for conceptualization in the verbal domain. The last fallacy then suggests that in attempting to resolve the language arts problems of Spanish-speaking children, the totality of the problem must not be misconstrued to be thoroughly understood.

Finally, attention is directed to the proposition that many of those individuals and institutions which could not previously resolve the issues of educating these children might be no more capable now or in the future under a new educational program with a new label. The solution appears to require first a commitment to the need for a newer way of thinking and working with these children and a "feel" for the problem. Secondly, along with a new kind of orientation, the solution requires a changed approach to planning, decision-making, and teaching, and hence, a different teaching leadership style. Finally, and most important, our society must somehow become wise and willing enough to make its most important of decisions in the decades to come, broadening the base of participation by opening its institutions at all levels to all of its peoples. Under these conditions, everyone will benefit.

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